



Maryland Longitudinal Data System Governing Board
Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2018

The meeting of the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Governing Board was held on September 21, 2018, in the Maryland State Department of Education Board Room, at the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. Dr. James Fielder, Chairman of the Governing Board, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and noted that a quorum was present.

The following Governing Board members were in attendance:

- Dr. James Fielder, Secretary of Higher Education Commission
- Dr. Sylvia A. Lawson, Deputy State Superintendent for School Effectiveness, (Designee for Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools)
- Mr. Chad Muntz, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Institutional Research, Data & Analytics, University System of Maryland (Designee for Dr. Robert Caret, Chancellor)
- Mr. Dennis Hoyle, Director of Research, Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities Association (Designee for Ms. Tina Bjarekull, President of MICUA)
- Mr. Christopher J. Biggs, Information Assurance Manager, Raytheon Company
- Dr. Farzad Moazzami, Acting Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Engineer, Morgan State University (Designee for Dr. David Wilson, President)
- Dr. Scot Tingle, Assistant Principal, Snow Hill High School
- Dr. Janet Wilson, Associate Superintendent, Office of Shared Accountability, Montgomery County Public Schools (Attending for Superintendent Jack Smith)

The following MLDS Center staff were in attendance:

- Mr. Ross Goldstein, Executive Director, MLDS Center
- Ms. Tejal Cherry, Director of System Management Branch, MLDS Center
- Ms. Laia Tideman, Data Management Coordinator, MLDS Center
- Dr. Bess Rose, Statistician, MLDS Center Research Branch and University of Maryland, School of Social Work
- Ms. Ann Kellogg, Director of Reporting Services, MLDS Center
- Ms. Dawn O’Croinin, Assistant Attorney General
- Ms. Jamese Dixon-Bobbitt, Executive Associate, MLDS Center

Approval of the June 8, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Dr. Fielder asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 8, 2018 meeting. Mr. Biggs made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Hoyle. The motion was unanimously approved.

IES Research Practitioner Partnerships Grant (Old Business)

Mr. Goldstein introduced Dr. David Blazer, Assistant Professor of Education Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park and noted that the Governing Board was briefed about this grant opportunity at the June meeting. The Center completed the required procedures under the *External Research and Grant Funded Projects*. Specifically, the application was reviewed by Center staff, the Research and Policy Advisory Board, and notification was sent to partner agencies. Due to the grant submission time frame, Mr. Goldstein requested and received authorization from Dr. Fielder, in his capacity as chairman of the MLDS Governing Board, to provide a letter of support for the grant.

Dr. Blazer began by explaining that the proposal was responsive to the Institute of Education Sciences' Research Practitioner Partnership Grant, which is a two year, \$400,000 grant. Dr. David Blazer would serve as the principal investigator. Other investigators include faculty at the College of Education, Prince George's County Board of Education staff, and Dr. Angela Henneberger from the MLDS Center Research Branch. The grant project addresses the critical question: What policies, practices, and resources are needed to staff all schools in Maryland with high-quality and diverse teachers?

The grant project has four primary goals:

1. Stakeholder convenings, which would bring together researchers, various practitioners from different local education systems, and a broad array of representatives from interested organizations to identify questions, challenges, and priorities facing the teacher pipeline and establish the groundwork for ongoing partnerships;
2. Develop a survey to track the implementation of innovative policies and understand what is happening and what policies are working;
3. Profile the teacher pipeline using MLDS data; and
4. An impact evaluation of one policy that will be implemented in Prince George's County to increase quality and diversity.

Dr. Blazer noted that the project is responsive to several MLDS Research Agenda Questions, including:

1. Are Maryland students academically prepared to enter postsecondary institutions and complete their programs in a timely manner?
2. Which 4-year institutions are graduating students most effectively and in the timeliest fashion?
3. Are exiters of Maryland colleges successful in the workforce?

Finally, Dr. Blazer noted that the project provides a benefit to the state in that it identified research questions related to teacher pipeline of interest to a broad set of stakeholders and it supports future research using advanced statistical analyses, including impact evaluations of program efficacy. Finally, the project will also inform the development and implementation of future teacher-oriented policies and practices to improve education for Maryland teachers and students.

Dr. Fielder began the discussion by posing several questions regarding teacher retention, including: whether financial aid programs improved retention; whether training received in-state versus out-of-state impacted retention; and whether the required types of certification impacted retention. Dr. Blazer noted that those are the types of questions the grant project would address but cautioned that some questions cannot be addressed because of data constraints. Hopefully, through working collaboratively with agencies and other partners the researchers will be able to identify those data constraints and find ways to resolve them.

Mr. Biggs noted that Maryland is a big importer of teachers and asked what information the MLDS has about those teachers and whether that information can be used to make strategic hiring decisions. Dr. Blazar agreed that teacher recruitment is an ongoing and important issue and will be a priority of the work. Included in that topic is how teachers are distributed - how do policymakers make sure the right teachers are in the right schools with the students who need them most. In addition, retention is also an important topic. Finally, Dr. Blazar noted that teachers are the most important resource for students and it is, therefore, important to understand how teachers impact students (grades, test scores, and other outcomes).

Janet Wilson asked whether the research will focus on teachers new to the profession or teachers new to Maryland. Dr. Blazar said that he was not sure and will rely on the planned partnership to collaboratively identify and develop needed questions.

Center Output

Data Requests

Ann Kellogg began by noting that the summer (first quarter of the fiscal year) is the slowest period for data requests. Only five new requests were received. This follows the same pattern as prior years. The most common topic of data requests is workforce outcomes (earnings and industry sector) of high school and college graduates.

Collaborative Engagements

Ms. Kellogg reported that the Center has had several opportunities to work collaboratively with partner agencies. The Center provided data on Southern Maryland regional education centers for USM to use in a legislatively mandated report. The Center also worked with MHEC and MSDE by providing information on the college-going patterns of Montgomery County students. The Center has been working with the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) on the report required under the Career Preparation and Expansion Act of 2018 (SB 978). That report requires MLDS Center and GWDB to provide a report on wages and industry sector of high school graduates five years after graduation.

Mr. Goldstein reported that the Center will begin hosting a series of MSDE PK-12 Teacher Dashboards. The dashboards were created by MSDE as a component of the projects funded under Race to the Top and were part of a larger set of PK-12 longitudinal data system dashboards. With the exception of the teacher dashboards the Center is hosting, MSDE determined the remaining dashboards were not being used and were therefore not needed. The Center agreed to host these dashboards because they represent a topic that the Center has worked on and plans to further develop using Center data. In addition, in exchange for

hosting these dashboards, MSDE will continue to fund the Center's Oracle license for the remainder of the fiscal year. This arrangement provides considerable savings for MSDE because they can close out the full set of PK-12 dashboards, the website, and several contractors used to support them. The dashboards can be accessed from the bottom of the MLDS website homepage. The dashboards clearly inform the user that the content is not a product of the Center and does not rely on Center data.

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

Dr. Bess Rose informed the Board that she and Dr. Henneberger presented findings from the ongoing study by the Center's Research Branch of student and school poverty to the *Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education* (Kirwan Commission). This study was originally requested by Senator Bill Ferguson and has been presented to multiple stakeholder groups, including the MLDS Center research and policy advisory board, the MLDS Center research series, Title I program managers at MSDE, and at the MD Connections conference. The Center was invited to speak to the Commission, as this work can inform their charge to review and recommend any needed changes to update the current education funding formulas and make policy recommendations that would enable Maryland's PK-12 system to perform at the level of the best-performing systems in the world.

Four main findings were presented:

1. Students who experienced poverty for longer periods of time had worse educational outcomes;
2. School concentration of poverty, regardless of individual experience, usually predicted worse educational outcomes;
3. Racial and ethnic gaps in standardized test scores persisted regardless of poverty; and
4. Racial and ethnic gaps in dropout, graduation, and postsecondary enrollment disappeared or were reversed when controlling for poverty and school composition.

The presentation was well received by the Commission and the Center was asked to conduct follow-up research regarding two questions:

1. Is there a tipping point where school poverty starts to have the most significant negative impact on student performance, and
2. Does the role of poverty vary among Maryland's school districts?

The Center conducted further analyses to answer these questions and returned to the Commission on August 15th to present those findings. Following the presentation to the full Commission, Dr. Henneberger and Dr. Rose participated in the afternoon meeting of Workgroup #4 (at-risk students) and answered questions about the research findings. Both presentations and video recordings are available on the Kirwan Commission website.

Finally, the Kirwan Commission also asked the Center to investigate the student- and school-related risk and protective factors that may play a role in the negative impact of poverty.

In response to a question from Dr. Fielder, Dr. Rose explained that the "tipping point analysis" showed that expected pattern (a steady decline in outcomes as school poverty increases) was not there. Instead, a more complicated picture emerged. At lower stages of school poverty, there was a steady decline in outcomes as poverty increases. However, at the middle ranges, the amount of decline decreased. At the

highest levels of school poverty, the declines abated, which may be a result of Title One and other interventions. Dr. Rose noted that the study was not designed to evaluate Title 1 or other programs and their effectiveness.

Also in response to a question from Dr. Fielder, Dr. Rose explained that the poverty measure is based on a student's eligibility for Free and Reduced Priced Meals (FARMS). FARMS is based on a student's household income. However, in 2012, the community eligibility program came into existence. This provision allows a school to apply for community eligibility and, if granted, provide meals for all students in the school. This also results in less student-level data that can be used to assess a student's socioeconomic status. Fortunately, the Center's study used a 2007-2008 cohort that was not impacted by the community eligibility program.

Finally, Dr. Fielder also asked whether the study indicated a need to raise Title 1 funding. Dr. Rose responded that her role is only to analyze the data and interpret the meaning of those data and that she could not make that type of policy recommendation. She did note that the follow-up research on protective factors for students in poverty may add more understanding about the impact of Title 1 funding.

Output Priorities

Ms. Kellogg provided an update on work being done on the Center's Reporting Services output priorities for 2018-2019.

- Priority 1 - Analysis of critical workforce areas - Work on this priority is being done through an ongoing analysis of community college students transfers and/or workforce outcomes in the areas of healthcare, engineering, and teaching. Ms. Kellogg has been presenting this work to numerous stakeholders to get input and feedback to help define the work.
- Priority 2 - Define and standardize key metrics in measuring earnings for high school and college graduates - Work on this priority is being done as part of the Center's work to fulfill the SB 978 reporting requirements. SB 978 requires the Center to provide earnings outcomes for individuals five years after high school graduation. Staff is spending time exploring new methodologies for classifying when an individual is a student and when an individual is consistently employed.
- Priority 3 - Collaborate with MHEC on the Student Outcome Achievement Report - Work on this priority has been ongoing.
- Priority 4 - Explore the number of students who exit Maryland public schools without graduating and earn a GED and their employment outcomes. Work has not yet begun on this priority.

In addition to the priorities, staff is also working to complete the required Annual Dual Enrollment Report for 2018.

Next, Dr. Rose reviewed the Research Priorities for 2018-2019 and then discussed the work of the Research Branch that addresses those priorities. Specifically, the Research Branch:

1. Has done a significant amount of work and reporting on the Poverty Study, including presentations to the Kirwan Commission;

2. Has completed a report on Dual Enrollment (beyond the Annual Dual Enrollment Report) that analyzes the causal effect of Dual Enrollment;
3. Is pushing other reports through the final draft and review stages;
4. Is developing a technical guide for research staff that identifies the best statistical analytic approaches to address situations where students attend multiple schools;
5. Has developed materials for researcher training to help new researchers navigate the complexities of the MLDS; and
6. Is applying for external funding.

System and Security Updates

Intrusion Detection System Update

Tejal Cherry began by reminding the Board that the Intrusion Detection System (IDS) was approved by them last year and then implemented in August 2017. The IDS was implemented to monitor traffic to the Master Data Management system to determine if there are any intrusions or bad traffic. CyberESI, the vendor providing the IDS, set up their equipment, conducted the monitoring services and provided a weekly activity report. Ms. Cherry noted that staff had to do a lot of work with CyberESI to understand the reports and ensure that they were useful. There was also a lot of variation week-to-week in the amount of traffic reported. Through the IDS, staff learned of IP addresses that they were not aware of and that more controls needed to be established. CyberESI also conducted a review of the firewall rules and network architecture and recommended several improvements and corrective actions. Staff now has a good idea of how and what to monitor and can recreate a lot of the functionality of the IDS moving forward.

Mr. Biggs noted that he was glad that staff can bring some of the monitoring services in-house and noted his agreement for phasing out the IDS. Mr. Biggs also asked whether the Center needed to conduct an annual assessment or review. Ms. Cherry responded that an annual assessment would be beneficial and noted that this could be included as part of the annual audit. Dr. Moazzami asked whether staff would include periodic updates to signature rules. Ms. Cherry responded that through the IDS services CyberESI was monitoring and updating signature rules, but staff is not able to do so. Dr. Moazzami asked whether the help of a graduate student working and studying those problems would be helpful. Ms. Cherry stated that it would be very helpful.

Data Security and Safeguarding Plan

Ms. Cherry explained that the Data Security and Safeguarding Plan (DSSP) requires that it be periodically reviewed and revised as necessary. During the past few months, Center staff have been reviewing the DSSP with a specific focus on its alignment with the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) security requirements. Overall, the DSSP addressed most of the issues in the DoIT security plan. However, there were a few areas that were not covered by the DSSP. However, most of those topics were not applicable to the Center's system, except for requirements for managing virtualization of technology. Staff plans to review virtualization requirements and how to incorporate into the DSSP. When ready, the changes will be brought to the Governing Board for review and approval.

Dawn O’Croinin asked about DoIT’s update schedule. Ms. Cherry responded that so far, DoIT is not providing an annual update each summer. However, staff will check for and react to updates as they occur.

Independent Security Audit

Ms. Cherry reported that staff is working to do another independent audit, similar to the one performed by Cyber ESI a few years ago. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) offers no-cost security scan and testing to state government agencies. As outlined in the memorandum circulated prior to the meeting, DHS, through its National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC), offers series security assessment and technical services. Staff has started completing the steps necessary to engage these services. Mr. Biggs commented that it appears these services will cover a lot of the same ground as the prior CyberESI audit. Ms. Cherry agreed but noted that there was no penetration testing, which may be something the Center will need to undertake separately.

2019 Data Collection Calendar

Liaia Tiderman began by noting that the Data Collection Calendar provides a timeline for the files submitted to the MLDS Center by each of the partner agencies. The calendar is reviewed and revised annually in consultation with the partner agencies, through the Data Governance Advisory Board. The goal is to align the calendar with the needs of both the Center and the partner agencies.

Mr. Biggs made a motion to approve the Data Collection Calendar, which was seconded by Chad Muntz. The motion was unanimously approved.

Old Business

Mr. Goldstein noted that two of the grants applications for which the Center provided a letter of support have been awarded. First, Dr. Rachel Durham, Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins University and researcher at the Baltimore Education Research Consortium received a small grant from the Spencer Foundation. Dr. Durham will study how postsecondary workforce indicators relate to college readiness indicators. It is a one year grant and she will begin work within the next few weeks.

The School of Social Work was awarded the Primrose Heights Neighborhood Implementation Grant. This grant was reviewed and approved by the Board last year. Drs. Henneberger and Rose will utilize Center data to conduct a program evaluation of the impact of the interventions funded through the implementation grant.

New Business

Dr. Rose noted that there were two new grant opportunities that the Research Branch is pursuing. First, is a Spencer Foundation Small Research Grant (\$50,000) that is due November 1st and will be focused on continuing the important work of the poverty study. Specifically, the grant project will look at the critical risk and protective factors associated with long-term academic and career outcomes for students living in poverty. Mr. Goldstein noted that the Center’s participation needs Board approval. The *Procedures for External Research and Grant Funded Projects* have been followed. The project is multi-sector and responsive to the Board’s Research Agenda. The proposal has been reviewed internally

and by the Research and Policy Advisory Board and received favorable recommendations. The information has been sent to subject matter experts and counsel at the partner agencies. No issues have been raised. Accordingly, Mr. Goldstein requested the Board's approval to support this grant application. Mr. Muntz made a motion to support the application, which was seconded by Mr. Hoyle. The motion was unanimously approved.

Second, Dr. Rose noted that there is an opportunity for an American Educational Research Association (AERA) Research Grant. AERA, with support from the National Science Foundation (NSF), seeks proposals that:

1. Develop or benefit from advanced statistical or innovative quantitative methods or measures;
2. Analyze a large-scale national or international federally funded data set, including a state longitudinal data system; and
3. Investigate education policy.

Drs. Rose and Henneberger plan to apply for this grant to further support the work of the poverty study. Specifically, they want to study issues around the measure of poverty and whether a better measure than FARMS data can be developed.

Dr. Fielder noted that he would like to see a study of the impact of Pell Grants on student debt and college completion to determine what is the most effective way to support student success. Dr. Rose agreed that it is an important topic which could be included in the poverty study. Ms. Kellogg noted that the Center received a data request on how many students who receive Pell Grants are concurrently working. Staff is working to turn this data into a dashboard for the website.

In response to a question from Mr. Hoyle, Mr. Goldstein stated that staff will continue to work through the *Procedures for External Research and Grant Funded Projects* (including staff review, RPB review, and referral to partner agencies). If all is favorable, a request will be made to the Chairman to approve the Center's support of the grant. Dr. Fielder noted that this process has been used and recognized staff for being very thorough when presenting a request to him. He also noted that grant approvals made by him are reviewed by the entire board at the next scheduled meeting.

Closing

Dr. Fielder reminded the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2018. Mr. Biggs made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Muntz. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting concluded at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ross Goldstein
Executive Director

Approved: December 14, 2018